

Halloween is an exciting time of year for kids. To help ensure their safety this Halloween, here are some safety tips from the Los Angeles County Department of Public Health, Injury and Violence Prevention Program.

All Ages

- Use bright and reflective costumes. Make sure shoes fit well and costumes are short enough to prevent tripping, entanglement or contact with flame. Costume materials must be flame proof.
- Add reflective tape or striping to costumes and Trick-or-Treat bags for greater visibility.
- Never use simulated (or real) knives, guns, or swords that look real. If props are used, make sure they ***do not look real***, and are soft and flexible to prevent injury.
- When shopping for costumes, wigs and accessories choose those that are clearly labeled "flame resistant".
- Carry flashlights with fresh batteries. Use only battery powered lanterns or chemical lightsticks rather than candles for costumes.

Ages 13 and older

- Plan and review with your children an acceptable route. Choose familiar a neighborhood and homes with outside lighting.
- Teach children how to dial 9-1-1 for emergencies or if they are lost. Remember 9-1-1 can be dialed FREE at any payphone.
- Have all children wear a wristwatch and carry coins for non-emergency phone calls.
- Instruct your child to never enter a home or an apartment building without a familiar adult.
- Because masks can limit or block vision, consider using non-toxic makeup and decorative hats as safer alternatives.
- Agree on a specific time when they are to return home.
- Openly discuss appropriate and inappropriate behavior at Halloween time.



Ages 12 and younger

- Always be accompanied by an adult when going door to door.
- Secure emergency identification (name, address, or phone) discreetly on Halloween clothing or bracelet in case a child is separated from the adult.
- Remember-review with your children "Stop-Drop-Roll" drill, should their clothes ever catch fire.



Safe Alternatives

- Visit community sponsored Halloween events.
- Community Centers, Shopping Malls and Houses of Worship may have organized festivities.
- Share the fun by arranging a visit to a Retirement Home or Senior Center.
- Check local College Fraternity/Sorority or Service Clubs for children's face painting or carnivals.

Home Decorating

- Small children should never carve pumpkins. Children can draw a face with markers, then parents can do the cutting. Under parents' supervision, children ages 5 to 10 can use pumpkin cutters equipped with safety bars.
- Votive candles are safest for candle-lit pumpkins.
- Lighted pumpkins should be placed on a sturdy table, away from curtains and other flammable objects, and should never be left unattended.
- To keep your home safe for visiting trick-or-treaters, remove anything a child could trip over such as garden hoses, toys, bikes and lawn decorations.



Home Decorating, continued

- Parents should check outdoor lights and replace burned-out bulbs.
- Wet leaves should be swept from sidewalks and steps.
- Consider fire safety when decorating. Do not overload electrical outlets with holiday lighting or special effects.
- Keep Jack O' Lanterns and hot electric decorations away from drapes, decorations, flammable materials or areas where children will be standing or walking.
- Remind all household drivers to remain cautious and drive slowly throughout the community.

On Halloween Night

- A good meal before parties and trick-or-treating. This will discourage youngsters from filling up on Halloween treats.
- Consider purchasing non-food treats for those who visit your home.
- Remind children and escorts (an adult or 13 years of age or older) to not eat any items given, until you have sorted and checked their treats.
- Remind children and escorts to never run between parked vehicles and cross streets at crosswalks.
- Remind children and escorts to not enter homes or apartments.
- Again, review with your children and escorts the route and behavior which is acceptable to you. Remind them again of the specific time when they are to return home.
- Confine, segregate or prepare household pets for an evening of frightful sights and sounds. Be sure that all dogs and cats are wearing collars and proper identification tags. Consult your veterinarian for further advice.
- Remind all household drivers to remain cautious and drive slowly throughout the community.
- Adult partygoers should establish and reward a designated driver.



When Trick-or-Treating

A parent or responsible adult should always accompany young children on their neighborhood rounds. Remind Trick-or-Treaters:



- To use always use flashlights, so they can be seen by others.
- Stay in a group and know where they will be.
- Only go to homes with a porch light on.
- Remain on well-lit streets and always use the sidewalk.
- If no sidewalk is available, walk at the farthest edge of the roadway facing traffic.
- Never cut across yards or use alleys.
- Never enter a stranger's home or car for a treat.
- Obey all traffic and pedestrian regulations.
- Always walk. Never run across a street.
- Only cross the street as a group in established crosswalks (as recognized by local custom).
- Remove any mask or item that will limit eyesight before crossing a street, driveway or alley.
- Don't assume the right of way. Motorists may have trouble seeing Trick-or-Treaters. Just because one car stops, doesn't mean others will!
- Never consume unwrapped food items or open beverages that may be offered.
- Law enforcement authorities should be notified immediately of any suspicious or unlawful activity.

After Trick-or-Treating:

- Wait until children are home to sort and check treats. Though tampering is rare, a responsible adult should closely examine all treats and throw away any spoiled, unwrapped or suspicious items. Remember, when in doubt~throw it out!
- Try to portion treats for the days following Halloween.
- Although sharing is encouraged, make sure items that can cause choking (such as hard candies), are given only to those of an appropriate age.

[Excerpts obtained from the American Academy of Pediatrics and the Los Angeles County Fire Department]